

M E M O I R S

OF THE

LIFE and WRITINGS

O F

SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq;

The English Aristophanes :

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

The Bon Mots, Repartees, and *Good Things*
said by that great Wit and excentrical
Genius.

“ Where are now your Gibes ? Your Gambols ?
Your Flashes of Merriment that were wont to fet the
Table in a roar.” }

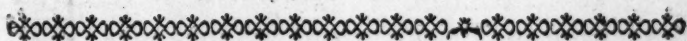
Shakespeare.

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T H E

M E M O I R S &c.

 AMUEL FOOTE, Esq:
 the subject of these memoirs,
 was descended from a very an-
 tient family at Truro, in Corn-
 wall; his father was member of parliament
 for Tiverton, in Devonshire, and also, com-
 missioner of the prize-office, and fine con-
 tract; his mother was heiress to the Dinely,
 and Goodere families, and in consequence
 of a quarrel and murder between the two
 brothers of that name, she became possessed
 of a very considerable fortune, not less as
 some assert, than five thousand per annum.

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The first part of his education he received at a school in Truro, from whence at a proper age he was enter'd of Worcester College, in the University of Oxford, a college founded by one of his near relations. From this seat of learning he removed to the temple, being designed for the study of the law, but the fatigue of poring over a set of musty old books not suiting his volatile genius, he quitted all thoughts of the bar, for the more alluring pleasures of the town.

Early in life, Mr. Foote came in to the possession of an ample fortune, but the extraordinary liveliness of his disposition added to an uncommon quickness of parts, rendering him a very desirable companion, he soon form'd a large circle of acquaintance, and joining with them in all the dissipation of the times, found himself in distress in a very few years.

It would be endless, as well as unenter-
taining, to follow him in this early part of
life, when his character was not yet suffi-
ciently

ciently the object of curiosity, perhaps we might in such a case find him one day in a coach, and the next in prison; at one time setting up for member of parliament, and at another time broiling a beef steak in a garret. We are told that he had an elder brother in Jamaica, whose large fortune in some measure, contributed to give the younger brother a degree of consequence in the city, that he might not otherwise have obtained.

In a whimsical moment he thought on the stage as a field for fame, and fortune; he, however, in some measure in the beginning, certainly mistook his powers, as his first appearance was in *Othello*, at the little theatre in the Hay Market as a trial; but, he had too much good sense not to see that his *Forte* did not lie in this cast of playing, he therefore turned to Comedy, in which he came off with more success; he appeared in *Fondlewife*, *Lord Foppington*, *Sir Paul Pliant*, &c. he was greatest in his *Clowns* and *Drivellers*, but it was a general remark, that he mixed

too much of his own natural character in the part he represented, and in whatever he played, the audience always saw Mr. Foote.

His applause therefore, was not what either his ambition or his merit entitled him to expect, so that leaving the beaten tracts of the stage, and disdaining to be *the parrot of the poets thought*, struck out into a new and un-trodden path, by which he added to the entertainment of the town, and at the same, supplied in a great measure the deficiency of an exhausted fortune; his scheme was in some measure, to introduce the high wrought characters of the Italian Comedy on the English stage.

About this time, the year 1746, Mr. James Worfdale, used to entertain private company's with an humourous exhibition of the foibles of his acquaintance; in which he joined at once the powers of a great knowledge of nature, and exquisite mimicry: Mr. Foote, whose powers in both were better fitted

ted by a more liberal education, and by keeping better company, resolved to entertain the town with mimicry better supported, and less vulgar than that of Worfdale; he therefore took upon himself the double character of poet and player, and with this view opened the little theatre in the Hay-market, in the year 1747, with a dramatic piece of his own writing and performing called the *Diversions of the Morning*. This piece consisted of nothing more than the introduction of several well known characters about town, who had little merit or much absurdity, Dr. T—r and two or three more, whose lectures, conversation, and peculiarities he had very happily hit in the diction of this drama, and still more exactly represented by the humourous manner in which he dressed and brought forth his characters. In the latter part also of this piece, under the character of a theatrical director, he took off with great humour and accuracy, the several styles or manner of acting of each performer then on both theatres.

Mimicry being a thing rather too personal to be permitted, and Mr. Foote, not as yet being possessed of sufficient popularity to bear down opposition, his efforts in the beginning met with a check ; for Mr. Lacy, of Drury-Lane theatre, put the act of parliament in force against him, for limiting the number of play-houses, &c. This induced him under the patrimony of a noble Duke, to alter the title of his piece ; and instead of inviting the town to see a play, he only intreated the company of his friends to *tea* : thus he proceeded without being molested, and gave his Tea in a run of upwards of forty mornings, to crowded and splendid audiences.

The ensuing season he produced another piece of the same kind, called the *Auction of Pictures* ; in this he introduced a number of new characters extremely well known, and hit off particularly Sir Thomas De Veil, then the acting justice of the peace for Westminster, Mr. Cock, the celebrated auctioneer of

that

that time, the famous orator, Henley, and several others.

Neither of these pieces have yet appeared in print, and were probably calculated merely for exhibition: from these incipient efforts he proceeded to works of greater regularity. *Taste*, a little piece, in two acts, was one of those; the character of Lady Pentweazle he borrowed from the outline of his friend, Wordsdale, and this is still held as a high finished piece. To that succeeded the *Knights*, a Comedy of two acts; the *Englishman in Paris*, of two acts; the *Author*; the *Englishman returned from Paris*; the *Minor*; the *Orators*; the *Mayor of Garrat*; the *Commissary*, and *Lyar*. During the writing of the above pieces he had several engagements with the managers of Drury-lane theatre, where he brought most of them out, and play'd the principal part in them.

At this time he used to make frequent trips to Ireland, and performed on the stage there,

there, though his receipts from the theatre in London were very handsome: in these excursions he used to bring out the new pieces he had just before exhibited in London, and by not selling immediately the copy, prevented any one else from producing them. In one of his pieces he introduced one Faulkner, the printer, in Dublin, which, when it was represented in that city, turned the man into such ridicule, that he could not stand at his shop door for the skitts that were continually thrown out at him by every one almost that passed by him; so highly had he been ridiculed by Foote, who not only copied his speech, but his dress and manner, that every one must have known the character at first sight. What seemed to affect Faulkner most, was a ludicrous story which Foote makes him tell on his passage with his wife from Dublin to Holyhead, and is as follows:—

“ Going over in the packet from Dublin to England, a storm arose, and every one expected the vessel would be lost; Mrs. Faulkner lamenting with her husband the dreadful
situation

situation they were in, and how very near they were to eternity, he spoke to her in earnest terms, and begged of her to answer him one question : she bid him name it. Tell me, my dear, says he, for perhaps we have not long to live, have you always been true to my bed? “ Sink or swim reply’d Mrs. Faulkner, that secret shall go to the grave with me.”

Faulkner resented the behaviour of Foote, and brought an action at law against him, and recovered damages to the amount of three hundred pounds ; this was a thundering stroke to a man who had seldom three hundred shillings before hand in the world. He therefore decamped *a la fourdine*, left Dublin and his bail to compound or settle the matter as well as they could, and came to England, where he was, notwithstanding, received with his usual favour, and very humbly took off the lawyers and judges who had tried the cause in Ireland.

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His

His Mayor of Garrat, which has always been a standing dish, and must ever be relished whilst such characters exist ; was wrote it is said, to revenge himself on Mr. Lamb, a Fishmonger in the Strand, and a major in the Middlesex militia. It seems Lamb served Foote with fish, and thinking his bill quite long enough, he dunned him very much for his money, finding however that words would have no effect, he arrested him for it, and Foote in return resolved to expose him for his assurance to arrest an author, and therefore brought him forward in the character of Major Sturgeon.

The Commissary was written during the last war, to ridicule a set of men (at the head of which was a gentleman of Berkshire) who by plundering their country under the name of Commissary, set up for fine gentlemen, without a single requisite to fill that character.—A dispute that had happened between the immortal Doctor and Mr. Foote,

led him to introduce the doctor on the stage in the part of Catgut: the performer who personated him, ap'd him well, and both his person and dress struck the audience at first sight, and brought to their mind doctor sol fa; the doctor having about that time added the name of author to the title of doctor, gave our wit fine room to exercise his fancy.

The principal figure in the author was suggested to him by a very intimate acquaintance, who calling on Foote one day, saw him in deep study, and asking him why so thoughtful, he told him he was 'considering on some new characters for a play; come with me says his friend, and see my relations, just come to town, and I'll be hanged if you meet with such originals any where as they are: Foote accompanied him and actually introduced them as the Cadwallader family: his friend to heighten the joke carried them the first night, it was represented to the theatre, but they were not such fools but they knew their own pictures; the Lord Chamberlain had
 licensed

licenced the piece otherwise the author would have had a denial ; a prosecution was then talked of, but by the interest of friends the matter was made up.

Sir F— B— D— was all along the fast friend and daily companion of Foote, his finances it may therefore be supposed were no ways mended by the acquaintance, in short he found himself at length very much out of elbows, and consulted Foote how to repair his fortune.—His person was very fine, his age and external accomplishments highly agreeable, the wit therefore advised him to get a wife with a great deal of money, the advice was highly agreeable to the Knight, but where was the woman to be found? Foote told him directly he knew a lady, if he did not mind beauty, that had a great fortune, and he believed he might after matrimony get rid of at a cheap rate, a bargain was struck immediately, Foote called on the lady, who then lived in Dover-street, worked up a tale that her relations were going to petition the
Chancellor

Chancellor for a jury to try her as non compos mentis, in order to get her fortune into their hands ; she asked his advice in this affair, he recommended matrimony, by which he said she might perhaps be doubly revenged on them, in the first place by her marriage, and secondly by having children, her relations would be cut off from the succession.—The lady was rather weak and easy to be imposed on, a conjurer was mentioned to who lived not far off, and she recommended to have her fortune told by him : Wordsdale was properly planted as the doctor, and she went to him to know about her husband, the doctor plainly laid down to her that she was not far off matrimony with the finest man in England, she was anxious to know how and where she should see him, his conjurorship told her he would be in the Park, at a certain hour in the Mall, and would have the corner of a white handkerchief out of his pocket ; she went accordingly, D——l was there properly planted, and as she could not muster courage to speak to him, he accosted her, an acquaintance

quaintance ensued, in short they were very soon married, laid one night together and then parted, she got a husband and he the money, and Foote it is said was well paid for his brokerage, and both he and D——l returned to their pleasures, little regarding the dupe they had made, or how she solaced herself for his absence.

Foote to assist him in his summer scheme when he was playing at the King's Theatre, in the Hay-market, as he had not then a sufficient number of his own pieces to give a variety to the town; engaged Mr. Barry, Mrs. Dancer, (now Mrs. Barry) to perform there: Mr. Barry had not at that time been in England for many years, having quitted Covent-Garden, and commenc'd manager at a new Theatre in Crow-street, Dublin, which he and Mr. Woodward had jointly built, but which project falling to the ground after they had spent all their money, and run considerably in debt, Mr. Barry came over as above remark'd to play with Mr. Foote, and was received

received by the public with the greatest applause ; at the same time Mr. Lee was also retain'd by Mr. Foote, and with Mr. Barry and Mrs. Dancer brought great houses ; Mr. Barry when the winter returned went back to his Theatre in Dublin, and thus played two or three seasons with Mr. Foote, and then engaged at the winter Theatres here : Mr. Lee also by the applause he gained made a very good engagement with the managers.

The little Theatre was at this time enlarging, it being very small before the alteration, and having but one gallery with the way into the pit at each angle of the front boxes ; here also Mr. Barry and Mrs. Dancer accompanied him and performed several nights, Mackheath and Polly with great eclat.

Mr. Foote might be considered about this period in the full possession of his powers, he was not fifty, enjoyed a great share of health, and was much followed by the public, but alas ! all human happiness is but transitory,
being

being one day out on a hunting match with the late Duke of York and several of the nobility, he had the misfortune to break his leg by a fall from his horse in leaping a ditch. The greatest attention was paid to his misfortune, surgeons from London were immediately sent for, but it being a compound fracture, it was found absolutely necessary to take off his leg, which was done above the knee, as otherwise he could not have made use of a false leg. He speedily recovered from this accident and good arose to him from evil.—He had long before this been soliciting his noble friends to procure him a patent, which all his intercession and their interest were unable to bring about, but luckily, (if we may use the expression) for him the loss of his leg with the pressing solicitation of the Duke had the desired effect, and accordingly a patent was issued to him giving him licence and liberty to open a Theatre in London, from the 15th day of May to the 15th day of September both inclusive the time of opening and shutting up of his Theatre were fix'd in the
above

above manner, that the Theatres of Covent-Garden and Drury-Lane might not be injured thereby: the performers benefits were generally over by the 15th of May, the remainder of the benefits being only the box-keepers and servants, and the usual time of opening those Theatres, was not till the 17th or 20th of September, these regulations were thought absolutely necessary, and are particularly expressed in the patent.

On the grant of this patent the little theatre, (now the theatre royal) underwent another repair and great enlargement, a house was purchased in the Hay-market, a new front erected, and the inside made as convenient and neat as the building would admit, a house was taken at the back of the theatre in Suffolk-street, where Mr. Foote resided, part of which he converted into a green room, wardrobe, and other necessary conveniencies, and we now for the first time see him patentee and manager of a theatre royal.

About this time the great dispute between the fellows and licentiates of the college of physicians attracted the notice of the whole kingdom, and the ridiculous figure which the quarrel threw them into by the assault on the college, made both parties heartily to be laughed at. So fine a subject with so open a field for satire could not escape the notice of Foote ; he immediately worked it up into a three act piece, and produced it whilst the story was fresh in every ones mouth, under the title of the Devil on two sticks. The event fully answered his most sanguine expectations, for he played it near forty nights, full two thirds of the time allotted by his patent, and the receipts of that season are reckoned the greatest he has since known, the net profits being upwards of four thousand pounds.

The Devil ever since has been highly relished by the public, and perhaps it may be attributed to a piece of generalship in Foote, and which the managers of our winter theatres have now entered upon. Finding the avidity
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of the public to see the representation to be so great, he concluded it would be greatly abated if they could read the play in their closets, determined not to print it which resolution he has kept in all his succeeding pieces, two only excepted, viz. the *Lame Lover* and the *Bankrupt*.

To the Devil succeeded the *Lame Lover*, very palpably a hasty production; but tho' it did not succeed so well as the devil, yet it brought him money; it was an assemblage of jokes put together in a hurry, (for he has been always accus'd of leaving every thing to the last moment); it however served as a *remove* in his summer bill of fare, and as it did not *draw*, he resolved to make the most of it by selling the copy, and suffering it to be published; the title drew the people, for having lost his leg, they naturally concluded he would perform the part from whence the piece was titled, and much humour would be introduced; they were not

disappointed in their opinion, for all the *good things* were put into his own mouth.

The public now being accustomed to see him with his cork leg on the stage, it did not appear strange to them, and he therefore thought he need not confine himself in his parts; the Devil and the Lame Lover being both so calculated, that the defect of his cork leg was not seen; or if seen, did not injure in any measure the representation; in the former always appearing with twocrutch-headed canes, and in the latter being a gentleman who had but one leg.

Mr. Foote had at this time an elegant villa at North-End, Fulham; a handsome town house in Suffolk Street, and got a great deal of money, but he wished to employ his winter evenings; an opportunity offered, Mr. Ross the manager of the Edenbro theatre; finding business did not answer there, had very wisely made an engagement with the managers of Covent Garden, and agreed to

to let the theatre at Edenbro. Mr. Foote took it of him at the clear yearly rent of six hundred pounds for the use of the house, cloaths, scences, &c, for the term of three years; a company was therefore formed, among which were Woodward, and Weston, the former at the amazing sum of fourteen pounds a week.

Mr. Foote accordingly went down to Edenbro in his own carriage and livery servants, and lived in that splendor which the Scotch had not been accustomed to in a *play actor*; in the evening, he used to come down the High Street (from the Castle Hill, where he lived) in his coach with two flambeaux behind, almost an unusual sight in that city, as most people go in chairs from the small number of passages that will admit of a carriage. The mob could hardly bear this insolence as they thought it, and would frequently call after the coach in derision "there goes the *play actor*."

The nobility and gentry, however, throng'd to the theatre ; the first night of opening was the Commissary, and Valet, and the receipts were one hundred and twenty three pounds ; this was on a saturday, the monday following Woodward exhibited, and played Marplot and the Drunken Colonel, to seventy five pounds ; sums the former manager never could rise to—a like success continued through the season, and many of the performers got money by their benefits, though the charges (every thing included) amounted to near fifty pounds more than double what they had used to have been before that season.

Notwithstanding the amazing expences he paid, yet at the end of the season he cleared seven hundred pounds ; a sum that would have appeared very great to the former managers, yet could not be allowed sufficient to pay the trouble, and risque of Mr. Foote as manager, as well as actor ; therefore, tho' he had agreed for the theatre for three years, yet he resolv'd not to revisit Edenbro ;
it was

it was too far from London for a man that had two legs he used to say, and much more so for him that had but one: he accordingly quitted that city as soon as the season closed and returned to London, and there assigned over the remainder of his term to Messrs. Digges and Bland, who are still in possession of that theatre, though at a smaller rent than what Mr. Foote paid, it being found too large for any but him to be able to give.

At his return to town he again made some alterations at his theatre, he purchased the house next his own in Suffolk-street, by which he was enabled to make a stage door, and a way to behind the scenes, for before that time the performers and all the servants, even to the pot girl went in at the box door, and behind the side boxes to the stage, so that frequently a Barber and a Peer had a re-encounter in the passage, and as it was but narrow his Lordship robbed the Friseur of part of his powdered coat.

The

The Maid of Bath was now produced, the subjects were certainly very proper objects of satire ; the old gentleman's meanness and avarice, and Mrs. Linnet's pride claimed the lash of the Comic Muse, the introduction of Lady Coldstream was a lucky thought, the having Mrs. Fearon in the company must have suggested it, and the introduction of it though the piece might have done without it was not a little helped thereby. This piece had a very good run and brought money into the managers pocket, the story of Miss Linnet and Mr. Flint was well known at Bath and in London, and no wonder then if it succeeded.

Mr. Foote now began to think of producing every year *something new*, with a curious eye he watched the current of the times and always took care to seize the most striking objects. A gentleman just arrived from India, making a great figure in the gay world, and who from a very low family had rose to a princely fortune which he dissipated in affecting

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ing the manners of the ton without one qualification requisite to form the gentleman. this person Mr. Foote made the hero of his piece, and christened it from the name usually given to those who return rich from the East Indies, viz. the *Nabob*. The public curiosity was greatly excited by the title and the comedy fully answered their expectations, as well as those of the manager, who performed the part himself, and most capitally.

The Bankrupt next came forward on this stage. The misfortunes of a capital house in the city gave rise to this piece, which is much more sentimental than any other of Mr. Foote's plays; he however has larded it as much as possible with humour.—The printers scene is truly laughable,—This piece he has given to the public, having published it last year; according to the stage phrase it did not draw so much as his other plays, and perhaps on that account he thought it best to sell the copy.

A late unfortunate Divine having given some cause of complaint in an offer to the Chancellor of a sum of money for the presentation to the living of St. George's, which then fell vacant, and was in his gift. The Chancellor exposed the affair, which was carried on by the doctor's lady in a visit to that of his lordship, and the consequence was the doctor's being struck off the list of King's Chaplains: this circumstance with a lady who had made herself famous for keeping an intrigue and place shop, helped to furnish the principal characters of the Drama of the Cozeners, being larded pretty much with scandal, it without doubt was very palatable to the public and well received; however the next season after its first representation, an additional scene was added fashioned out of an old story, but so well told, that it was received with pleasure: it was that of a lady going to a mercers in her coach, buying a quantity of silk, and taking him with her in her carriage home, to receive the money; instead of which she drives to a mad doctor's, where she

she gives the doctor an account of the mercer being a relation of hers, and out of his senses. The lady takes her leave of the mercer, desiring the doctor to satisfy him, which he promises to do ; a ridiculous and laughable conversation by a misunderstanding arises between the doctor and mercer, when the latter is carried off by the doctor's servants, crying out that he should bring an action for false imprisonment for Wilkes's affair was but a flea-bite to his. This piece in 1776 was performed many nights, and to crowded audiences.

The Dutches of K——, who had long been a general topic of conversation, our wit thought would very well furnish a subject for a three act piece : he set about it, and during the time of writing it, often mentioned it to his friends, to some of whom he read the character of Lady Kitty Crocodile, which was intended for her Grace. We are told the satire was very high seasoned, and the play one of the best he ever wrote. Her
Grace

Grace heard an account of her being intended as a principal in one of Foote's pieces preparing for representation, applied through her friends, to the Lord Chamberlain, and when the play came before his Lordship for his approbation, it was critically scanned, and a permission refused. Mr. Foote, however, certain that no objection could be laid to it on her Grace's part, sent her the manuscript to read, but she was inexorable. 'Tis said, that Foote asked her Grace three thousand pounds to lay it aside, but this was a misrepresentation of the affair, Foote only remarked to a gentleman employed to go between him and her Grace, that it would be a loss to him of three thousand pounds, for as the season was advanced, he could not possibly provide another piece, and the profits reasonably to be expected from it, would amount to that sum, and therefore he could not possibly suppress it, under what he might expect to receive from the representation. It was, however, refused permission, and a paper war immediately commenced between her

Grace

Grace and the wit, to the no small entertainment of the town.

On the above account the season at the Hay-market was finished without any new piece, and the public greatly disappointed, who flattered themselves with being highly entertained at the expence of her Grace, and some other well known characters.

In the winter, Mr. Foote went to Dublin, and played there a number of nights at the amazing sum of fifty pounds per night. It may not perhaps be amiss to remark, that on his going to Ireland, he discharged such servants as he had no occasion for, among the rest his coachman, who expressing his wishes to accompany his master, Mr. Foote very good-naturedly took him with him as a livery servant, having no occasion for a coachman: on his return to London, and a short time before the usual season began, the servant we have just now mentioned, having behaved very ill in the family, was discharged Mr. Foote's service, and straightways applied to
Sir

Sir John Fielding for a warrant to bring his master before the justice, for having taken very indecent liberties with his person.

Mr. Foote immediately gave in bail for his appearance at the quarter sessions, from whence he removed the indictment to the court of King's bench, where it was accordingly tried, and Mr. Foote honourably acquitted.

The friends of the Dutchess of K——, on the first mention of the footman's story, took him under their care, and managed his whole prosecution. The public papers were daily filled with calumny of the blackest dye, in order, if possible, to inflame the minds of the public against Mr. Foote, and prevent, his appearing on his theatre as an actor, which undoubtedly must have shut it up, as the company then stood, he having made no preparation for such an attack, and his whole strength lying principally in his own performance, which had all along supported the theatre.

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The time for opening came, but Mr. Foote was indeed afraid to appear before that awful tribunal, the public, till such time as he had purg'd himself of the accusations laid to his charge. Term was still some way off, and though he was daily losing money by not beginning, yet he rather chose to be a sufferer, than meet his friends till he had been exculpated of the charge. His intimate acquaintances, and some of the first nobility, insisted on his opening the theatre, which at their request he did. The evening came, the house was crowded in a few minutes, every part of it; he made his appearance, was received with the loudest plaudits; in a very affecting speech he told them he had long been their servant, and enjoyed their favour, and should not have come before them had he not been compelled to it by the very warm solicitation of his friends; that he pledged himself to them, that he would prove to their utmost satisfaction, that the charge alledg'd against him was the offspring of malice, and no ways founded on truth. The performance went
on

on with great applause, and every one seemed to think he had been hardly used.

On the accusation being made against him, and well knowing the fury of the parties who set the servant on, and who, he thought, would stick at nothing to accomplish their ends, and bring about his destruction, he thought it most adviseable to be prepared for such a stroke, should it happen, and accordingly entered into articles with Mr. Colman, to let to him the said theatre, with all the scenes, cloaths, &c. &c. &c. for, and during his life, (which determines the patent) at, and for the sum of fifteen hundred pounds per annum, clear of all charges and expences, however, during this, his last season for holding the managerial chair, he altered and new modelled the piece which had been refused permission, by entirely changing the characters, and indeed the plot, and it accordingly passed the fiery trial of the chamberlain, and was produced under the title of the Capuchin. When we consider that the
characters

characters in the fore ground of the piece were obliged to be taken out, and how great the alteration it must occasion in the situation of the other parts We cannot wonder if in the representation it should not appear so perfect as the rest of his pieces : it however answered his purpose, for the season, (notwithstanding the tongues of villainous slander were so much abroad) was one of the best he had ever experienced at the Hay-market.

In April last he was attacked with a fit of apoplexy, which however, did not make any great impression on him ; he was again lively and well, and on the Saturday before he set out for France, was as chearful, and in as good spirits as his friends ever remember to have seen him. On the Monday following he set out, attended only by his Valet, for France, and at Dover (supposed to have caught cold) was taken ill, where he had a fit of apoplexy ; he took to his bed, where in a short time he died, on the 19th day of October,

tober, 1777, his body was brought up to town, to his house in Suffolk-street, from whence it was interred in funeral pomp,

The following are a list of the pieces written by Mr. Foote.

Taste, a Comedy of two Acts.

Knights, Ditto

Englishman in Paris, ditto

Englishman returned from Paris, ditto.

Author, ditto.

Lyar, ditto, in three acts.

Mayor of Garrat, ditto, in two acts.

Minor, ditto, in three acts.

Commiffary, ditto, in ditto.

The Patron, ditto, in ditto.

The Devil upon two Sticks, in three acts.

The Maid of Bath, ditto.

The Nabob, ditto.

The Cozeners, ditto.

The Bankrupt, ditto.

The Capuchin, ditto

Few authors can boast of having written so many ; perhaps no one of having so rarely experienced the censure of the theatre, His *Forte* was the exhibition of character, in which, although he was rather a painter for effect, than the holder of a delicate pencil, for boldness of outline, and strength and truth of colouring, he stood unrivalled. His dialogue in general is terse, easy, and witty. His scenes teem with true humour, and under the mask of infinite pleasantry, convey the strongest satire. No dramatic writer ever paid less attention to the fable of his plays, and yet there are not to be seen in the whole round of modern pieces, so many striking pictures of vice and folly as have been drawn by the late Mr. Foote ; he may truly be said to have “ caught the living manners as they rose,” and to have the happy art of presenting, whatever he designed to exhibit, in a point of view so truly ridiculous, that every

auditor

auditor was under the necessity of joining in the general laughter excited, and left the theatre not the less amended for having been uncommonly well entertained. To sum up all we have to offer in this hasty attempt to do him some sort of justice ; as an author he was fertile, comic, and nervous ; as an actor bold, original, and warm ; his talents, it is true, lay rather in the exhibition of caricature than character ; in a peculiar line, however, and that of a capital sort, he was not only masterly, but superior to every competitor. As a private man, he was humane, generous, and friendly ; softened by the tale of distress, liberal in the relief of indigence or the reward of merit, and ready on all occasions to assist either with his pen, his purse, or his personal interest, all who had the smallest claim to his friendship. In the company of men of high rank, and superior fortune, (who eagerly sought his acquaintance) he preserved an easy and noble independency ; as a man of wit and conviviality there lives not his equal. Nor was he less hospitable than

than social ; his many, many friends who now live sincerely to lament his loss can attest this assertion. Since no man therefore has more essentially contributed to the entertainment of the public, nor more repeatedly made the minds of his acquaintance expand with mirth and good humour, let us in gratitude pass over his few foibles, and reflect on his many virtues, with that mixture of joy and sorrow felt by every individual, who in the moment he regrets the loss of a dear friend, rejoices that among the actions of his life many deserve the highest praise, and that the effusions of his genius have established him a degree of fame superior to the blasts of envy, the efforts of malice, and the corroding tooth of time itself.

All Mr. Foote's baggage was embarked when he was seized with the fatal illness that carried him off, and the vessel in which he was to have gone to Calais, sailed the very same day, so that if he had continued in health firm enough to travel, his friends
would

would have lost several little testimonies of his esteem, as all the effects he dyed possessed of would have been forfeited to the crown of France, by the Droits D'aubaine.

Mr. Foote left a son, now at a boarding-school in Aylesbury, to whom he has bequeathed all he was possessed of. The late Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Hamilton, of Falcon-Court, Fleet-street, and Mr. Jewell, (for many years his treasurer and steward) are named in his will his executors.

B O N M O T S,

JESTS, REPARTEES, &c. &c.

F O O T E in his imitations took off most of the actors who had any thing remarkable either in their *speech*, *air* or *gait*. Among the number he introduced on the Hay-Market stage, was Mr. Obryen, of Drury-lane theatre. Being then but a new performer, a young man, and a perfect master of the sword (his father being a fencing-master) he determined to call Foote out; his brother comedians laughed at the resolution he had taken, and said, nobody minded it; that he ought to make himself happy, when he considered that his very defects gave bread to an individual, only by copying them. He was not, however, to be put out of his purposed intention. He accordingly sent Mr. Foote a note, that he should be glad to speak a few words with him, and waited on him. After attending a short while in the parlour, Foote appeared. Obryen be-

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gan immediately on the injury he had done him in his profession, by making him appear ridiculous to the town, in *taking him off*. Foote endeavoured, at first, to laugh him out of his anger, but it would not do; at length he said to him, since, Sir, you seem to be of opinion that *taking any person off* is making them ridiculous, if you will but have a moment's patience, you shall see me *take myself off*. Obryen could not conceive what he was going about; knowing the humour of the man, he expected something very curious and entertaining to divert him from taking things in a serious light; he therefore sat down, and Foote, as to prepare himself, opened the door and went out. Obryen waited impatiently after the expiration of five minutes, and ringing the bell, asked the footman where his master was. "Gone out, Sir," says he. "I know," says Obryen, "he went out of the parlour;" "but," replied the man, "he is gone out of the house." Obryen took his hat and left Foote's, and never mentioned the matter again; the joke of Foote's *taking himself off* having

having fully satisfied for what he thought an injury, but he soon learnt that every man in public life must submit to.

Foote and Garrick were always on very good terms as acquaintances, yet, notwithstanding, Foote could not help having a cut at Garrick, whenever any opportunity offered. A young gentleman, inclined to the stage, asked Mr. Foote's opinion as to which theatre he should apply; he replied, that Garrick certainly had judgment to discern and candour to allow of merit wherever he found it; but advised him to be cautious in making his bargain, for in that he would be too hard almost for the devil himself.

Foote in all his pieces where he has introduced a Scotchman, has been very severe on that nation; 'twas from no antipathy he had to them, but jokes more readily sprang up from satire than panegyric, and he was one of that sort, that he would rather lose his friend than his jest. In the Devil upon Two Sticks, where two physicians are discoursing together,

ther, the one Scotch and the other Irish; a stander-by asks if botany is not a dry study in Scotland; to which the Irishman replies, "to be sure it is, for they have nothing but dried herbs, the devil a green one will grow there. Why, all their cabbages are thistles, and even those they raise in hot beds."

Foote's wooden, or rather cork leg, was so well contrived by springs, that he could move his knee, ancle and toes, and but for a small hitch in his gait, which those who did not know him took for lameness, he might very well have passed as having both his legs. Going after the Hay-market had shut up, to spend the remainder of the season at Brighthelmstone, a German baron being in company with him and some more gentlemen, and bragging very much of his courage, Foote dared him to run a pin into the calf of his leg, which he accepted; the wit immediately took a pin and ran into his cork leg; the baron, with much-ado, squeezed one in his, but hopped about the room, making a most hideous roar, whilst Foote
sat

sat quiet with his friends at the table, laughing at the baron's folly.

An Irish country gentleman, who was rather an œconomist for the meridian of that country, whenever he found his guests disposed to push about the bottle briskly, used frequently to enter into a panegyric on the virtues of his daughter, which being a subject the company were in good manners obliged to listen to, answered the desired intent. One day boasting how much she saved him as an œconomist, Foote being present, and seeing the bottle stand before him for above half an hour, exclaimed, "And besides all this, gentlemen, there is not a year of his life she does not likewise save him above a *tun of wine*."

It may be necessary, perhaps, for the information of our female readers, to acquaint them, that at auctions of prints in the evening, the auctioneer sits in a chair at the head of the table with the bidders. At one of these auctions, at Mr. Smirk's, in Covent-garden,

garden, young Smirk held the hammer, and having a dispute with old doctor——, who sat next him, the young gentleman very *politely* hit the doctor a knock on the head with the hammer. Foote was there, and coming soon after into the Bedford coffee-house, was asked what news from the auction? to which he answered, “that young Smirk had made a small mistake, and knocked down a gentleman instead of a lot.”

The above Bon Mot Mr. Foote afterwards introduced, and with great success, in his comedy of the Minor, when speaking of the death of Mr. Smirk.

Foote being some time since at a nobleman's house, his lordship, as soon as dinner was over, ordered a bottle of Cape to be set on the table, which, after magnifying its good qualities, and in particular its *age*, he sent round the table in glasses that scarcely held a thimble-full. “Fine wine, upon my soul,” says the wit, tasting and smacking his lips. “Is it not very *curious*, says his lordship? “perfectly so indeed,” says the other:
“I do

“ I do not remember to have seen any thing *so little of its age* in my life before.”

Mr. Baddeley, the comedian of Drury-lane, was bred to the profession of a cook, and though considered as a very good one, yet left the kitchen for the stage. Weston, with whom he was a great crony, introduced him to Foote, who brought him out at his theatre, from whence he got an engagement at Drury-lane, and rose to the present esteem in which he is held by the public. Mr. Foote, till very lately, never entered into any written agreements with his performers, his word was considered as sufficient, (which he always inviolably kept.) Baddeley, after playing some seasons with Foote, had got into a pretty large cast of parts, and became very useful. Mr. Foote sometime before his season began, met him, and told him, he supposed he would be at the Hay-market as usual in the summer; to which Baddeley replied, he should certainly be with him. However, an opportunity offering in one of the country companies from London,

where

where Baddeley thought he should get more money and have parts he liked better, joined the company without acquainting Mr. Foote, and set off for either Bristol or Liverpool. When the Hay-market season began, no Baddeley appeared, and Mr. Foote was at a loss to supply immediately his place. On being told of his departure, Mr. Foote said, "What an ungrateful fellow this is; I was the man that made a gentleman of him; for I took the spit* from out of his hands, and put it by his side."

When Mr. Foote was giving out the parts of his New Pieces to the several performers, he usually had something to say to each of them. In delivering those of the Minor, he gave of Loader to Mr. Davis. "Now Davis," says he, "you will be at home to a hole; only be yourself through the part, and you cannot play it amiss."

* At that time Mr. Baddeley and most of the players, were very fond of wearing swords in the park and about the streets.

Baron B——, a celebrated gambler; well known by the name of the *left-handed* Baron, being detected some years ago at Bath secreting a card, the company in the warmth of their resentment, threw him out of the window of a *one-pair-of-stairs-room*, where they had been playing. The Baron meeting Foote some time after, was loudly complaining of this usage, and asked what he should do. “Do,” says the wit, “why it is a plain case, never play so *high* again as long as you live.”

When Foot heard of Sir Francis Blake Deleval's death, the shock of losing so intimate a friend had such an effect on his spirits, that he burst into tears, retired to his room, and saw no company for two days: the third day, Jewel, his treasurer, calling in upon him, he asked him, with swollen eyes, what time would the burial be? “Not till next week, Sir,” replied the other, “as I hear the surgeons are first to dissect his *head*.” This last word recovered the wit's fancy, and repeating it with some
G surprise,

surprize, he asked, " And what the devil will they get there : I am sure," says he, " I have known poor Frank these five and twenty years, and I never could find *any thing* in it."

Foote being engaged to a rout of lady Harrington's, found the ladies all so thickly seated, that on his entering the drawing-room, he could not get a place to sit down in. " Come, Foote," says her ladyship, " *you* must not be kept standing, take a chair." " You are very obliging, my lady," says the wit ; " but there appears to me to be more *bottoms* than *chairs* at present about the room."

When Mr. Foote's piece of the Minor was first brought out, some of the clergy took umbrage at a passage in it, which Mrs. Cole speaks, *viz.* " had it not been for him, I had been a lost sheep." saying, that it was wrong to introduce any part of the Scriptures on the stage in buffoonery. The play was then performing, consequently had received

ceived the approbation of the Chamberlain. The Bishop of London, it is said, sent for Mr. Foote, and remonstrated with him on the impropriety; Foote assured his lordship it should be altered on the next representation, which was accordingly done; for when he came to that line, he said, " had it not been for him, I had been a lost *mut-ton.*"

The death of the late Mr. Holland, of Drury-Lane theatre (who was the son of a *baker* at Chyswick) had likewise a very great effect on Foote's spirits; being a legatee, as well as appointed, by the will of the deceased, one of his bearers, he attended the corpse to the family vault at Chyswick, and there very sincerely paid a plentiful tribute of tears to his memory. On his return to town, by way of alleviating his grief, he called in at the Bedford coffee-house, when an acquaintance coming up to him, asked him if he had not been paying the last compliment to his friend Holland? " Yes, poor fellow,"

fellow," says Foote, almost weeping at the same time, " I have just seen him *shoved* into the *family-oven*."

When Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son first came out, a gentleman was asking Foote, whether they did not contain great knowledge of the world, " O yes, Sir," says he, " very much, they inculcate the morals of a w—e, and the manners of a dancing-master."

Foote meeting his old acquaintance, Major B——, at Bath, this last season, (a character well known in the annals of gaming) came up to him, and asked him with great cordiality, how he was? " Ah! Foote," says the other, " I have had a terrible accident since I saw you last; no less than the *loss* of an eye." " My dear fellow," says the wit, " I am heartily sorry for it; pray at *what* game?"

A physician at Bath told Mr. Foote, that he had a mind to publish his poems; " but," said he, " I have so many irons in the fire,
I do

I do not know what to do:" " Then take my advice," said Foote, " and put your poems into the fire with the rest of your irons."

When Mrs. Macaulay published her *loose thoughts*, Garrick, who was in company with Foote, said, " it was a very improper title for a lady;" to which the wit replied, " he was of a different opinion: for the sooner a woman got rid of her *loose thoughts* the better."

Foote being one night very merry at the Bedford coffee-house, the conversation happened to turn on the abilities of Mr. Garrick, as an actor, when amongst many compliments to that celebrated performer, it was observed as somewhat extraordinary, that though he was so excellent an actor himself, he was far from being lucky in his pupils. " Why yes," replies Foote, " he is something like the famous running-horse Childers, the best racer in England *himself*, but could *never get a colt*."

At

At Mr. Fordyce's sale at Roehampton, Foote, who attended almost every day, bought nothing but a *pillow*, on which a gentleman asked him, what particular use he could have for a single pillow? "Why," says Foote, "to tell you the truth, I do not sleep very well at night, and I am sure this must give me many a good nap, when the proprietor of it (though he *owed so much*) could sleep upon it."

When Foote was last in Ireland, he happened to see at the Castle, one levée day, a person in the *suite* of the Lord Lieutenant, whom he thought he had known for many years to have lived rather a life of *expediency* in London; to corroborate his suspicion, he asked lord Townsend who he was. "That is one of my *gentlemen at large*," says his excellency: "Do you know him?" "O yes," says Foote, "very well; and what you tell me of him is very extraordinary; first that he is a *gentleman*; and next that he is *at large*."

Foote

Foote happening to spend the evening with two dignitaries of the church, the conversation insensibly turned upon a point of polemical divinity, which the two churchmen took up on different grounds, with great vehemence and strength of argument. Foote, during the contest, took no other share in the debate, than in recruiting their spirits, by constantly keeping their glasses filled : at last one of them turned about, and begged that, as he could be at times as argumentative, as witty, he would step in as an arbitrator of their differences. " I thank you kindly, gentlemen," says Foote, very gravely ; " but I have always made it a rule never to interfere in *family affairs*."

When Foote heard that doctor Kenrick was going to give a public criticism on his comedy of the Cozeners, at Marybone, " Well," says he, " let the doctor take care of the fate of our first parents ; *a fall in the garden*."

About three years ago, Foote went to spend his Christmas with the late C——

B———n,

B——n, Esq; when the weather being very cold, and but bad fires, occasioned by the scarcity of wood in the house, Foote was determined to make his visit as short as possible; accordingly, on the third day after he went there, he ordered his chaise, and was preparing to set out for town. Mr. B——n seeing him with his boots on in the morning, asked him what hurry he was in, and pressed him to stay. “No, no,” says Foote, “was I to stay any longer, you would not let me *have a leg to stand on.*” “Why sure,” says Mr. B——n, “we do not drink so *hard.*” “No,” says the wit, “but there is so *little* wood in your house, that I am afraid one of your servants may light the fires some morning with *my right leg.*”

A gentleman just married, telling Foote he had that morning laid out three thousand pounds in jewels for his *dear wife*. “Faith, Sir,” says the wit, “I see you are no hypocrite, for she is truly your *dear wife.*”

When

When Foote first heard of doctor Blair's writing notes to Offian, (a performance the *reality* of which has been doubted) he observed, that the booksellers ought to allow a great discount to the purchasers. "Why so," says a gentleman present. "Because," says he, "they are *notes of damned long credit.*"

Foote and Garrick being at a tavern together at the time of the first regulation of the gold coin, the former pulling out his purse to pay the reckoning, asked the latter, "What he should do with a light guinea he had?" "'Pshaw, its worth nothing," says Garrick, "*fling it to the devil.*" "Well David," says the other, "you are what I always took you for, ever contriving *to make a guinea go further than any other man.*"

At the time of the Jubilee at Stratford, planned and conducted by Mr. Garrick, in honour of Shakespeare, the weather in general (though early in September) turned out very bad; particularly the day appointed for the public procession, which obliged that part of the ceremony to be dispensed

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with.

with. Garrick meeting Foote on the morning of this day in the publick breakfasting-room, just in the moment of a very heavy shower of rain, Well, Sam," says he, rather disappointedly, "What do you think of this?" "Think of it," says Foote: "Why, I think, it is *God's revenge against Vanity.*"

The Mrs. *Reddish*, that was Miss *Hart*, (for the gentleman from whom she takes her name, has had so many *female connexions*, it is impossible to distinguish them, but by their original names) playing the queen in Richard, one night at Drury-lane theatre, and being rather of a coarse masculine make, a gentleman asked Foote, who sat next him, who she was? Being told her name Reddish; "Reddish! Reddish!" says the gentleman, endeavouring to recollect her. "Aye, Sir," added the wit, "*Horse Reddish.*"

Foote and the Delavals being out one night playing their pranks, and kicking up a dust, got into a squabble at a house of ill fame,

fame, and were going to throw the landlady out of window, after having demolished a number of bowls and other china ware. A constable was sent for, and they were carried before Sir Thomas De Veil, who was then the acting justice for Westminster. Though Foote and his companions were well known to the justice had they been called by their names, yet he was a stranger to their persons ; he began to harangue them harshly. " Come," says he, " Good woman," to the old bawd, " stand *before* me, and tell your story." " Aye, do," says Foote, " Tell the truth and *face* the *devil*," pointing with his hat to Sir Thomas. However, the justice, on hearing their names, settled the matter, and discharged the culprits.

Foote being at supper one night at the Bedford coffee-house, just after Garrick had performed *Macbeth*, the conversation very naturally turned on the merits of that great performer ; when, after many eulogiums on the universality of his powers, it was allowed that he was the first actor *on any stage*.

“ Indeed, gentlemen,” says Foote, “ I do not think you have said *half* enough of him, for I think him not only the *greatest* actor *on*, but *off** the stage.”

Mr. Foote being asked his opinion of the Stratford Jubilee, replied, “ A Jubilee is a public invitation, urged by puffing, to go post without horses to an obscure borough without representatives; governed by a mayor and aldermen who are no magistrates; to celebrate a great poet, whose own works have made him immortal, by an ode without poetry; music without melody; a dinner without victuals; lodgings without beds; a croud without company; a masquerade where half the people appeared bare-faced; a horse-race up to the knees in water; fire-works extinguished as soon as they were lighted; and a boarded booth, by way of amphitheatre, which was to be taken down in three days, and sold by public auction.”

* It was from this hint, perhaps, doctor Goldsmith took the idea of Garrick's character, in his poem called, Retaliation,

Mr.

Mr. Foote walking up and down the rooms at Bath, a gentleman with him, asked a third, a lady's name just then passing by them; to which he replied, "Brown, Sir." "Aye," says Foote, staring at the lady, "a lovely *Brown* indeed!

Foote being one day at the British coffee-house among the Scotch physicians, and speaking of one of the faculty not long from Edinbro', a gentleman asked Foote, if he kept his coach? "No, Sir," says the wit, "his coach keeps him."

When Foote was told of doctor B——n's death, he said, he had cut his throat, to prove (*multum in parvo*) the rectitude of all his conclusions upon the manners and principles of the times, being the sum total of all his *theoretical divisions*, reduced to this single and concise rule of practice.

A lady one day taking notice of Foote's feet, which were remarkably long, said, "Lord, Sir, I believe your *Foote* is a yard long.

long." Yes, Ma'am," replies the wit, "and my *Yard* is a foot long."

Foote, at the coffee-house, being in company with two gentlemen, one of whom was reproving the other, that he always forgot when his reckoning was paid for him, but was sure to remember when he paid for any body else. "Why," says Foote, "'tis owing to an infirmity he has got, he has lost half his memory."

Foote being asked his opinion of the author of *Tristram Shandy*; replied, "that with all his *stars*, he was but an obscure winter."

Sir William B——, who swears almost at every word, calling one day on Foote on his return from seeing Godfrey's experiment tried, to extinguish fire in a house, by throwing into the rooms some chemical balls which he had prepared, Foote asked him if the balls answered; says Sir William, "Aye, damme, they would extinguish hell fire; then

then replied the wit, "order a number of them to be put into your coffin."

One day where the wit was in company, the building of Richmond-bridge was the topic; a gentleman asked, what the piers were to be built of, wood or stone. "Stone to be sure," says Foote, "for there are too many *wooden peers* already in this country."

Foote going to Ireland, on a pane of glass at an inn at Chester saw wrote, with a diamond, "My lord D—— has the *softest* kissing lips in the whole world." Upon which he wrote underneath,

"Then as like as two chips,
"Are his head and his lips."

A gentleman talking to Foote of an absent person of their acquaintance, said, he was a dunce. "Nay, now you abuse him," said Foote, "he is no dunce, but to be sure he is a damned fool."

The

The first night that Savigny (who was by trade a cutler) appeared on the stage, Foote went to see him. It was in tragedy, and a lady who sat in the same box with him, seemed greatly affected with the play. Foote entered into conversation with her, and the new actor of course was the topic. Lord," says the lady to him, "he is very *cutting*, Sir." "That's not at all wonderful," replied the wit, "for he is a *razor grinder*."

Foote, some time ago, took a house at Hammer Smith, that was advertised to be *completely furnished*. But he had not been there long before the cook complained there was never a rolling-pin. "No," said he, "then bring me a saw, I will soon make one." Which he accordingly did, of one of the mahogany bed-posts. The next day it was discovered there wanted a coal-scuttle; and he supplied this deficiency with a drawer from a curious japan chest of drawers. There was never a carpet in the parlour, and he ordered a new white cotton counterpane to be laid to save the boards.

His

His landlord paying him a visit, to inquire how he liked his new residence, was greatly astonished to find such disorder, as he considered it: he remonstrated to Mr. Foote, and complained of the injury his furniture had sustained; but the genius insisted upon it, all the complaint was on his side, considering the trouble he had been at to supply those necessaries, notwithstanding he had advertised his house *completely furnished*. The landlord now threatend the law; and Foote threatened to take him off, saying, an auctioneer was a fruitful character. This last consideration weighed with the landlord, and he quietly put up with his loss.

Every anecdote of so extraordinary a character, naturally excites the curiosity of the Public: When Foote had gained a pretty considerable sum by giving tea, he resumed the *bon ton*, from which he had been a good while sequestered; and as it was necessary to have a lady to do the honours of the table, he took one upon Harris's recommendation, and she was introduced to him at the

Shakespeare. He approved of her carving; and, after supper was over, ordered her home, as he had in vain endeavoured to make her speak during the whole repast; saying, "that a silent woman, who was a perfect mistress of the honours of bed and board, was one of the most desirable objects upon earth,"

Foote rattling away one evening in his green-room with great wit and brilliancy, as he usually did; the duke of C——d, who was present, and seemed highly entertained, cried out, "Well, Foote, you see I swallow all your good things." "Do you, my lord duke," says the other, "why then I congratulate you on your digestion, for I believe you never *threw up* one of them in your life."

Mr. Foote was once asked, why learned men are to be found in rich men's houses, and rich men never to be seen in those of the learned, "why," says he, "the first know what they want, but the latter don't."

At

At the tavern one day after dinner, Foote being in company, pipes and tobacco were called for; the pipes were very short; Foote bid the waiter get some others; the waiter replied, they had none, and those were but just come in. "Aye," says Foote, "one may see your master has not bought them *very long*."

Upon Mr. Foote's seeing the compliments paid by Mr. Colman to Mr. Garrick, in the prelude to the *Man and Wife*, humorously remarked, that it put him in mind of a Ludgate-hill prostitute, who tickled you with one hand, whilst she picked your pocket with the other.

The same witty genius observed, upon being told at the Smyrna that there would certainly be a *coalition*, that he did not doubt but that both *ins* and *outs* would *unite in—fleecing the people*.

A certain wou'd-be-wit attempting to divert himself at the expence of the English

Aristophanes, when at Stratford, Mr. Foote asked him abruptly, where he came from? To which the other pertly replied, "From *Essex*." "Aye, returned the actor, pray who *drove* you hither?"

A gentleman at Mrs. Cornely's one evening, seeing some wax fall from a chandelier on that part of a lady's dress who sat next him, not a great way from her bosom, immediately took out his watch, and clapped one of the seals upon it. "Bless me, Sir, said the lady, what are you doing?" "Why, Madam," says Foote, (who was in company with the gentleman) "he is only trying to *make an impression* upon you."

Lord C——, a great crony of Foote's, very fond of fun, and though a lord, not overstocked with sense, used to be continually plaguing Foote about his turning actor, and going on the stage. "What," says he one day to him, (when there was a good deal of company by) "could possess you, Foote, to go *on* the stage and play the fool."

"The

“ The very same reason that actuates your lordship to play it off.” “ What can that be ?” “ Want,” replied the wit. “ Want,” says his lordship. “ Aye,” says Foote, “ Want of money makes me play the fool, and want of wit, your lordship.”

Foote, having had an invitation from a certain nobleman, who was reputed to keep a very elegant table, to dine with him, and having no manner of aversion to a good repast, he accordingly waited upon his lordship; but found the regale far from answering his expectation. Upon his taking leave, the servants, who were very numerous, had ranged themselves in the hall; Foote, finding that if he gave to each of them, it would amount to a pretty large sum, asked, “ Which was the cook ;” who readily answered, “ Me, Sir.” He then enquired for the butler, who was as quick in replying as the other; when he said to the first, *Here’s half a crown for my eating*; and to the other, *Here’s five shillings for my wine*; but, by G--d, gentlemen,
I never

I never made so bad a dinner for the money in my life.

Foote was, some time after, met by the same nobleman, who asked him, " Why he did not come and eat soup with him ? " " By G—d, my lord, said Foote, I am ashamed to come, since I find your lordship keeps a *cook's-shop*." His lordship asked an explanation; when he told the nobleman, " His was the dearest and worst *ordinary* in London; for a man paid for his dinner *literally*, and very exorbitantly, at his lordship's house." Foote was told by his lordship, that this should be rectified for the future, and that he should lay severe injunctions upon his servants to take no vails. Upon this promise Foote was prevailed upon to return; but having failed to pay for his dinner, as usual, the next time he came he had a dirty plate given him for a clean one, bread for beer, and frequently neither one nor t'other, after repeated applications. When dinner was finished, he addressed himself to the company, and pushing round a
plate

plate with half a crown upon it, said, *I think we had better pay for our dinner now, before we begin upon the wine; for I have a notion they imagine we intend to bilk them to-day.*

At a tavern one evening, where the glass had gone merrily round, and all the company were mellow, Foote being toast-master, called on a young nobleman, remarked for his viciousness, for his toast. "D—me," says he, "I'll give you the Devil." "Well," replies Foote, "I have no objection to any of your lordship's friends."

Just at the time that news came of the king's army having evacuated Boston, Chace Price, Foote, and some more genius's were at the tavern, and conundrums was the word. When it came to the Foote to propose, he gave, Why is Boston like the Ministry? No one could solve. At length, Foote being called on for a solution, said, "Because it was *abandoned*."

Foote,

Foote, in his younger days; being one night beating the rounds with some bucks of his acquaintance, among whom was Charles B——, Esq; (who was the reputed natural son of lord ——, but whose mother was very free of her favors to numberless others) they got into a squabble, and from words they came to blows. At that time, it was the fashion for gentlemen to carry oak-sticks, and B—— had one, with which he laid about him most unmercifully, on the heads of his assailants. Foote bid him be quiet; “for,” says he, “how do you know, but you may kill your father.”

One day in company where Foote was, the subjects on the carpet was the emigration of the Scotch to London, one gentleman would have it, that they did not come in such numbers now as they did about a dozen or fourteen years ago, and this he positively insisted on. Foote, at last, took him up, and told him, “he was certainly wrong; but, says he, I see how you are deceived; you cannot distinguish them now as formerly,
for

for the fellows now all come *breeched* to London."

In all the disputes Foote used to have about the literature of Scotland, he never would allow that any of them were deeply learned. "I'll allow you, says he, they all have a *mouthful* of learning, but not one of them has a *bellyful*."

An affected fellow, but a man of fortune, who used to call in a morning on Foote, because it was the fashion to be great with the wit, called one day on him at his country-house, at North-end. When he entered the room, he affectedly threw himself on a sofa; Foote asked him, how he did; to which he answered, "I don't know how I do, faith, Foote; I am, I'm *not myself*." "Why then, says the wit, whoever you have *changed* with, has made a damned bad bargain."

Foote having fatirized the Scotch pretty severely, a gentleman asked, "why he hated

K

that

that nation so much." " You are mistaken, says Foote, I don't hate the Scotch, neither do I hate frogs, but I would have every thing keep to its *native element*."

Anecdote of Mr. Foote.

The day Mr. Foote sat out for Dover, about an hour before he went into the chaise, he walked into every room in his house, examined with an accuracy not usual to him, every article of furniture he had, but more particularly his pictures, of which he had a large and elegant assortment. When he came to the portrait of Weston, he made a full stop, as if by some secret impulse, and rivetted his eyes upon the countenance of his old acquaintance for above ten minutes, without uttering a syllable; then turning off with a tear in his eye, he exclaimed, poor Weston! But the words had scarce dropped from his lips, when, with a tone as it were of reproach for his seeming security, he repeated again, poor Weston! It will be very shortly, poor Foote! or the intelligence of my spirits deceive me.

Anecdote

Anecdote concerning Mr. FOOTE.

The Scotch, till lately, were not accustomed to see plays represented even in a decent manner, at Edenbro', the very metropolis. The performers, except one or two, were only fit for dumb lords at the theatres in London: the reason given by the managers was, the want of Encouragement. The old theatre was a very miserable place, and held but a small sum; the new one, (the theatre-royal) is a handsome building, the inside neatly set off, and the audience well accommodated.

The capital was a long time before they would admit of a company of comedians, and many disturbances happened, by the attempts of the zealots to suppress stage representations. In the country of Scotland actors were unknown, until one Fisher carried a company through the highlands, in the years 1767 and 1768, and even then they were hooted as they passed the streets; the younger folks now come into the fashion of frequenting the theatre, but the old ones still conti-

nue great part of their antient dislike to players, distinguishing them by the name of *Play-Actors*; and the common people use it as a taunt, when they pass the streets.

So disagreeably situated, a gentleman of any rank in the profession of the stage, did not chuse to go to Edenbro', as it was almost impossible to form any society but amongst his brother actors, consequently the manager picked up his companies the best way he could.

However, when Mr. Foote came to Edenbro, he took an elegant house on the Castle-hill, built in the English Taste and handsomely furnished, his own coach attended him with his footmen, and he carried down his housekeeper, who officiated also as cook. It seems she always went to market, and one morning being seized with the rheumatism, she had some wine made hot; but the fit continuing, and being in her feet, she was obliged to have a sedan chair home (the fare was but four-pence there.) From the above circumstance, a paragraph got into the

the Edenbro' newspaper, to the following purport :

“ The cook of a gentleman just come to this city, and whose house is not far from the Castle-hill, every day she goes to market, has a bottle of mull'd wine allowed her, and a chair to carry her home.”

When the above was read at Balfour's coffee-house, a number of old gentlemen, at the fire side, were bethinking themselves who this person could be, that was so extravagant. One said, “ Egad, it is Foote ; for ye ken he lives on the Castle-hill, and is just come to town.” Another answered him, “ it could not be Foote the play-actor, for the paper said it was the cook of a *gentleman*.”

On the death of Mr. FOOTE.

Ye sons of frolic, mirth, and fun,

Ye jokers hang your head ;

Your patron's earthly race is run,

And wit itself is dead.

“ That

- " That cannot be," a bard replies :
 " 'Tis true that Foote may die ;
 " But wit immortal still must rise,
 " And seek her native sky."

Epigram on the Death of Mr. Foote.

Satire and irony no more

Shall forth their arrows shoot,

Ev'n wit must fall—the reason's plain,

Because she 'as ne'er a *Foote*.

Epitaph on Samuel Foote, Esq;

Alas ! poor Yorick !

Not all thy squibs, thy quiddities and joke ;

Not all thy cunning cou'd evade the stroke.

Thy jests that set the table in a roar,

Thy wit and humour shall be heard no more.

Thy puns, thy satire, and thy mimic rage,

No more shall grace the table, nor the stage.

Now vanity may rear her pompous crest,

And vice, in virtue's trappings, may be drest :

Low great men indulge themselves in riot ;

And—Dutchess drink and live in quiet.

For

For lo ! beneath this closing marble lyes,
 The scourge of vanity and rod of vice.
 Now they may revel, nor exposure dread,
 The wit—the mimic—satirist—is dead.

Epitaph on SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq;

(*From SHAKESPEARE.*)

Here lies the body of
 The ENGLISH ARISTOPHANES !

A FELLOW

Of INFINITE JEST,

Of

Most EXCELLENT FANCY.

Alas !

Where are his GIBES now ?

His GAMBOLS, his SONGS,

His

FLASHES OF MERRIMENT,

Which

Were wont to set the TABLE in a ROAR ?

Not ONE, now,

To mock his own GRINNING !

We could have better spared a better MAN.

He

He was
 One of the *best actors* in the world,
 Either for
 TRAGEDY, COMEDY, HISTORY, PASTORAL,
 OF FARCE,
 He held
 The MIRROR up,
 And
 Shew'd SCORN her OWN IMAGE.
 He was the *abstract*—and *brief chronicle* of
 the times.—
 In short,
 For the law of WIT—and the LIBERTY,
 He was
 The ONLY MAN !

On Mr. FOOTE's Death.

Foote from this earthly stage, alas! is hurl'd;
 Death took *him off*, who *took off* all the world.

F I N I S.